

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 3, and 7 as follows, without prejudice or disclaimer to continued examination on the merits:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended):

A method for intelligent packet forwarding over a network, comprising:
~~grouping a plurality of packets together to form a grouping based on each of the plurality of packet's~~ providing a virtual port comprising a grouping of one or more STS-1s allocation allocated to a particular client and the an amount of bandwidth ~~allocated to each of the plurality of packets associated with the grouping;~~
assigning the grouping to a predetermined data flow path from a source port to a destination port, the predetermination made expressly for the grouping; and
establishing the predetermined data flow path for the grouping from the source port to the destination port.

Claim 2. (Previously Presented):

A method according to claim 1, further comprising notifying each of said source port and destination port of said data flow path, and providing to said source port an address identifying said destination port and providing to said destination port an address identifying said source port.

Claim 3. (Currently Amended):

An apparatus for intelligent packet forwarding over a network, said apparatus comprising:
a grouping device that ~~groups a plurality of packets together to form a grouping based on each of the plurality of packet's~~ provides a virtual port comprising a grouping of one or more STS-1s allocation allocated to a particular client and the an amount of bandwidth ~~allocated to each of the plurality of packets associated with the grouping;~~

an assignment device that assigns the grouping to a predetermined data flow path from a source port to a destination port, the predetermination made expressly for the grouping; and

a path identifier for identifying a data flow path extending from said source port to said destination port and notifying each of said ports of said data flow path.

Claim 4. (Previously Presented):

The method according to claim 1 wherein the network is a SONET network.

Claim 5. (Canceled)

Claim 6. (Previously Presented):

The method according to claim 1, wherein the grouping is designated by a network access device.

Claim 7. (Currently Amended):

The apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising an address identifier for identifying and providing to said source port ~~and~~ an address identifying said destination port and for identifying and providing to said destination port an address identifying said source port.

Claim 8. (Previously Presented):

The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the network is a SONET network.

Claim 9. (Canceled)

Please cancel Claims 5 and 9 as indicated above, without prejudice or disclaimer to continued examination on the merits.